



# HARTFORD STREET ZEN CENTER

57 Hartford Street San Francisco, California 94114 Telephone: 415/863-2507

Newsletter

April/May/June 1989

## HSZC

### Annual Meeting

January 29, 1989

*The meeting began with an announcement. Issan said he hoped people would become involved and feel they have something to say. The following synopsis gives a brief overview of the meeting. Those attending provided the following agenda items:*

#### **Maitri Hospice Program's Relationship to HSZC:**

The Hartford Street Zen Center is a Buddhist practice center recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax exempt non-profit organization. We are administered by a Board of Directors which meets periodically to set goals, and establish and review policies. More immediate policy questions and decisions are handled by an Executive Board whose members are drawn from the larger Board of Directors. There is a weekly staff meeting currently being held at 1:00 pm on Tuesday, to which all currently active volunteers are also invited. Issan Dorsey is the Chief Executive Officer of HSZC. Minutes of past Board meetings are kept in a binder on the bookshelf near the front door.

The Maitri Home and Hospice for People with AIDS is a project of the Hartford Street Zen Center. It is administered by a Board of Trustees which is its main fund raising body and which also establishes and reviews policies for the hospice. This Board meets on a monthly basis. There is also an Advisory Board consisting of twenty community leaders who will be meeting once a year to help give direction to the Hospice Program.

#### **Membership:**

It was noted that membership numbers are down and that we need to make a serious effort to encourage people to become contributing members of HSZC as we are currently running a monthly deficit of between \$400-\$500.

#### **Volunteers:**

Volunteers are needed in many areas: the kitchen, daily up-keep chores, gardening, newsletter production, practical and emotional support for



hospice residents. There is also a need for people to join together for "work parties" to tackle small projects such as painting and doing repairs to the buildings. There will be a notebook in the bookcase near the front door and a bulletin board in the kitchen of HSZC for would-be volunteers to check what they can do and leave their names, phone numbers and available times. You can also speak to David Bullock or Niki about volunteering, projects or questions.

#### **Fund Raising:**

Fund raising is another area where volunteer help is very important. If you are interested in helping please speak to Angelique Farrow.

#### **Zendo Practice:**

The possibility of having more extended sittings and Oryoki meals in the zendo was discussed. This can only happen if people express interest. Everyone who sits regularly is encouraged to volunteer to be trained for the zendo position of Doan. Both Issan and Zenshin Philip Whalen are available for Dokusan (practice interviews) to answer questions and discuss students' practice. Please make appointments in advance.

#### **Practice Housing:**

People practicing at HSZC interested in finding group housing arrangements in the neighborhood can put notices on the large bulletin board.

#### **Financial Reporting:**

David Sunseri is preparing a financial report that should be available in the near future. All records of HSZC have always been open and available for examination by appointment. The Treasurer of HSZC is Angelique Farrow.



*The following was written by Rosa Becker. Rosa is a longtime member of HSZC who volunteers one afternoon a week helping to prepare the increasingly popular Tuesday night open dinners. She practices regularly at the San Francisco Zen Center where she is also an active member.*

Emila Heller, longtime zen student and guest speaker at the San Francisco Zen Center on Page Street, shared this poem from the Native American tradition with the Sangha. I would like to share it with you.

"Sometimes I go about pitying  
myself and all the time I am  
being carried along by great winds  
across the sky."

Those words touched me. I could relate. Being a person who has always wanted more, and right now--I often lose sight in the moment of how much I have! How wonderful to return to the source to realize there is a different way of seeing things. At these times my gratitude is great and I aspire to a strong practice--to practice with sincerity and open-heartedness. I feel from my gut an appreciation for the opportunity to wake up and see things as they are--to little by little experience trust and faith in my life. Looking up at a picture of the kind and smiling face of the Dalai Lama I realize one of my biggest challenges is to know when enough is enough and to get over myself just a little! I truly believe the most I can do for myself and others at this point in my life is to *just sit*. I want to thank Hartford Street for the opportunity to sit and to experience Sangha together.

Gassho

Rosa Becker

## A Lady of Many Devices

Diane di Prima is a vibrant and eloquent poet--mercurial yet grounded, a commanding, good humored woman. She visited for February Maitri evening. Looking much too young to have been one of the leading lights of the 1950's poetry movement--a renaissance which included Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Kerouac, but few women--Diane spoke to us about her writing, family, and Buddhist practice.

Described by Zenshin Philip Whalen, who introduced her, as a "Lady of many devices," she is perhaps best known as the author of the epic poem "Loba". Diane is currently working on her autobiography, *My Life as a Woman*--the title alone could charm me into buying the book. The way she described her method of writing reminded me of ancient Chinese poets and painters who shunned premeditation in art and practiced instead with long walks into the mountains. She said, "When I write prose the rhythm and tone announce themselves. I never stop to correct it. I just type as fast as I possibly can."

Recently, she was at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center in Colorado practicing meditation, studying Mahayana texts and writing her own versions of Haiku poetry.

Niki Rothman





## **The Cosmic Lady: A One-Woman Harmonic Convergence**

*Celeste West, a writer, publisher and longtime friend of HSZC is also a big fan of Cosmic Lady. She contributed the following fan letter.*

Thanks to the Cosmic Lady, our March Maitri came in as the wildest lion, the gentlest lamb, their individual crown chakras blown and blended in adventurous affirmation of the life force. Fifteen years a San Francisco street legend, the Cosmic Lady did it again, her own special rhyme-time cosmic rap scattering visions of crisis and opportunity over us like faerie dust. Once a "planetary grouch" the Cosmic Lady received her academic degrees in social work. Her most advanced degrees in human and galactic consciousness were earned the hard way, in mental institutions where society typically imprisons many of its visionaries and telepathically gifted; on the streets as a bag woman where free spirits are tested to the ultimate; and by her whole-hearted commitment to tell her healing truths, to "speak her peace," no matter how lean an earthling must live to follow this practice period.

This self-styled "high-grade lunatic" and "transformation specialist" uses such poetic metaphors as the tarot, the Kaballah, alchemy, astrology, Native American and Christian wisdom to dramatize universal essences. The Cosmic Lady brought her amazing BIG BOOK of these to show us. It contains about ten 2x3 foot pages of "cosmic cram sheets", brilliantly woven diagrams systematizing and connecting the various spiritual schools in rainbows of color. The Cosmic Lady effortlessly dovetails occult metaphors into zen affirmations of change, wonder, balance, non-judgement, androgeny, and above all, to the adventure of waking up. "Breath is our greatest affirmation."

J.D. mentioned it to her, and many of us felt the Cosmic Lady's special field of energy. She presents us with a gift of darkness that is also vibrant with galaxies, offers us a womb of cosmic laughter to surround the terror of rebirth. May we be with her flow.

## **First Maitri Hospice Benefit May 6**

An auction and dance benefitting Maitri, a Home and Hospice for People with AIDS, will be held Saturday, May 6 at Fort Mason in the Conference Center, Building A at 7 pm. This event is part of a campaign to raise \$120,000 for building renovations, food and operating expenses.

Dinners at Greens restaurant and the Atrium, a night at the Ark bed and breakfast inn in Inverness, and a cruise for two on San Francisco Bay in a private sailing boat will be among hundreds of surprises, art objects and vacations to be auctioned.

Drinks, snacks and dancing until 1 am in a beautiful room overlooking the bay and Golden Gate Bridge. No host bar. \$5.00-\$10.00 sliding scale admission. We hope that as many Sangha members as possible will be there to give their support to Maitri and to enjoy a fun filled evening together.

For this auction to be a success, your generous contribution of services, items to be auctioned, or whatever support you can give is important. If you can help on the night of the event, or help in any way at all, please call 863-8508.

Hope to see you the night of May 6!

## Let Your Light Shine

*Issan and Rick Levine went to meet with Father Alfred Boeddeker, O.F.M. one day in January to discuss the Maitri Hospice Program. Issan had grown up near Father Alfred's church in Santa Barbara and recalled since childhood, that Father Alfred loomed as an example of an inspired life of religious service. Rick, Medical Director of the Maitri Hospice Program, works as a physician at Saint Anthony Foundation which Father Alfred founded.*

*Father Alfred at 86, was enormously gracious. He accepted our invitation to include him as a member of the Maitri Board of Advisors, and gave his blessing. And he offered that "Love is an act of the Will..."*

*The following printed comments were given by Father Alfred and are reprinted with permission.*

You have heard that powerful slogan: "It is better to light one candle than curse the darkness." A great change--one truly needed--could be made in our city if each one would light the candle of love and justice. Nothing negative is called for--no attacking of others for something they believe or do--no hatreds, no politics, no religious strife. Let there be no waste of strength in noisy crusades, waving of banners, flaunting of picket signs, campaigns of shouting.

No, let your light shine by doing your own special tasks well. Let your effort be positive, private, personal. Let your light kindle the flame of another's torch, one passing on the light to another. Even one candle can erase the darkness for a person, one handclasp can lift a soul, one sunbeam can brighten a room. You carry your light as you visit a shut-in, when you are kind even to one not too pleasant, when you do little things that please your husband or wife; when you speak an uplifting word; when you try to get a job for someone in dire need of employment. One bird can herald spring. One speech can set a goal. Be fair and just in business dealings and inspire others to do likewise.

If each and all of us will do good in our own way, according to our own light and understanding and religion, the moral climate will gradually change for the better. Our city is full of good-hearted people. When they let their light shine, they better themselves, their families, their neighborhoods. They can change society as leaven changes the mass of dough.

Be optimistic. Remember, one flower can awaken dreams of goodness, hope and joy in another. One song can recapture a memory. Remember

It is better  
to light one  
candle  
than to curse  
the darkness

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shared joy is double joy. Self-love is sterile and stagnant while self-giving is self-fulfilling. One smile can start a friendship as one star can guide a ship at sea.

Let your light shine by taking action. Visit that elderly mother, father, grandparent or friend in a convalescent home. Bring a flower or food to that shut-in in your neighborhood--or just listen in patience and sympathy. Run an errand for that blind man, perhaps, or help that crippled lady on the step; aid them in shopping or assist, accompany and protect them in one way or another.

Each individual good lets some light shine and uplifts the moral climate. When you plant one tree you may be starting a forest. One step must start each journey. One word can inspire hope. You, yes you, are in a position to do something no one else could do as well to make a desirable difference in our city.

O for light! For the true light that enlightens all men. May it be rekindled in the hearts of all who believe and love with the love of God, and shine forth full of faith, hope and love for all.

Christ Jesus said: "I am the light of the world." Like the sun in the morning sky at dawn, He sends forth His rays for you to reflect. Like rain on the meadows, He refreshes human lives.

In His Name,

Father Alfred Boeddeker, O.F.M.  
St. Anthony Dining Room  
Adult Benevolent Association



## In Memoriam

It is with deep feeling that we announce the death of Michael Merrill. Michael was a very dear friend to many of us--a man with a naturally kind and loving nature. He was a great benefactor of our practice place: a founding member of HSZC who served on the Board of Directors and as Doan. He often displayed a combination of intelligence and spontaneous wit that under-cut the most awkward situations. Michael was a questioner who was willing to sit with his questions. We will miss him very much.

Issan has said "We have bonds with each other that are more important than life or death." Lately, Issan has been saying how Michael was always there when we needed him and how he was the main person to help when we first started doing hospice work.

Michael's funeral service and a ceremony for scattering his ashes was held at HSZC on Sunday, March 19.

The following article was written by hospice resident J.D. Kobezak the morning that Michael died.

In the Castro once I was walking along and a little old lady and man were walking towards me. The old lady looked at me and collapsed. Her husband eased her to the sidewalk holding her head up and they sat there on the corner of Castro and 18th. Someone called an ambulance. It made a lot of queens nervous on busy Castro Street. After a few minutes she was fine and they cancelled the ambulance. I crossed the street and watched her husband care for her. They got up and proceeded on their journey. My bus came and I went home. I think about that when I get depressed about dying.

Two years ago Pierre and I went to the Russian River with two friends. We came back with one. Jim was very sick with AIDS. In the morning the three of us were watching Pee Wee Herman. His lover went back to the room. Chris returned and said, "J.D. come back to the room with me. Something is wrong with Jim. Hurry!" I went into the room with him. Jim was laying in bed with his eyes open and dilated. I felt his neck, there was no pulse and watched and listened for breathing. There was none. I told his lover he was dead and asked Chris if he wanted me to do CPR. He hesitated and said, "Yes."--even though Jim had asked that he not be resuscitated and signed a letter saying he just wanted to die peacefully. I asked Chris to do the mouth to mouth and I did cardiac compressions for Jim (and Chris). Pierre came in and I said "Jim's dead. Call an

ambulance." He ran and called them. Chris began crying. I said, "You can't cry now, you can cry later." He stopped crying. The ambulance came and we stopped. The paramedics calmly hooked him up to a machine and there was no response, just a flat line. The three of us hugged Jim's dead body and we sat on the bed holding each other, crying. We were sad because we missed Jim. We went to the funeral home to make the arrangements. I called my mother for comfort. Pierre and I drove Chris back to S.F. and we came back to the river. That night Pierre and I gave him a funeral service in the room. On the fireplace we burned incense and candles, and gave an offering of a potato pancake that we bought for Jim the night before, and we meditated. That night I slept with the light on and noticed every little noise thinking it might be Jim. Later we went to his memorial. He had planned everything. There was music and someone read a letter that he wrote to us.

Issan says, "We need to examine why we think sickness, old age and death are unfortunate. If sickness, old age and death are unfortunate then so is birth. We are always suffering." I hope it is joyful suffering. Last night Michael died. He was a Buddhist and lived here in the hospice. He had to go to the hospital because of seizures and then went into a coma. I wish he were here with his friends when he died. This morning I cried for him, burned incense and lit a candle. I chanted and wished him a joyful journey.

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*The following poem was written to Michael Merrill while he was still in a coma at Garden Sullivan Hospital.*

Fooled  
Shot through the heart.  
The bullet I used  
(or was it an arrow)  
Hit a big rock  
And came back to me.

Richocheted,  
the news came  
and hit me  
straight through my heart.

My heart ached when  
the light came.  
Jesus, Buddha, and Socrates  
You all saw how it was.  
Direct experience,--Ouch! hurts.

Michael Merrill,  
Can I be with you?

*Linda E. King*



## Small Verses

*Hartford Street Zen Center and the Maitri Home and Hospice for People with AIDS exist only through the help and support of members and friends. Their generosity makes it possible for HSZC to exist as a Buddhist practice center and to continue working to provide an environment of service and care for people with AIDS.*

### Maitri Hospice Update

Well into our second year, we are now home to four people with AIDS and will soon be able to accommodate a total of six hospice residents. The renovation plan is proceeding – we have joined the two buildings by creating a connecting doorway between them. David Bullock has established the kitchen and is overseeing the cooking of meals for 15 people. Visiting Nurses/Hospice of San Francisco will soon increase our attendant care coverage to a full 24 hours a day.

In the last several months many people have made a commitment to volunteer time and energy. They are deeply appreciated. As Issan recently said: "We've got to take care of the care givers as well as we take care of the people who are sick."

Special recognition goes to our Maitri hospice volunteers George, Bob, Sharon, Charles, Niki, Steve, Bruce, Fu, Brother Antonio, Angie, Bobbie, David, Pierre, Michael, Melissa, Ken and Maggie. Our dedicated professional attendants Greg, Jay and Gary have demonstrated patience, constancy and the commitment to caring that is central to making Maitri Home and Hospice for People with AIDS a reality.

We would like to recognize a debt of thanks to Tensho David Schneider for faithfully giving one Sunday morning a month for the last several years to lecture at HSZC.

Thanks to Bruce Boone for helping with Monday evening introductory zazen instruction.

It takes a very special kind of person who has the energy and compassion to work all week and then on "days off" donate their valuable professional skills and time to the community.

Our deep appreciation goes to Mark Denzin. Mark is a licensed acupuncture practitioner who is providing once a week acupuncture treatments for Maitri residents, staff and volunteers. Mark's gentle strength and ability to listen with an open heart have added a real healing spirit to our zendo.

Patrick Duffey, a professional social worker with the Salvation Army has generously begun volunteering his services to assist Maitri hospice residents to gain access to a wide variety of social services. Thank you Pat.

Longtime friends of HSZC, Jack and Gay Reineck have generously donated their professional architectural and contracting skills which are enabling us to carry out plans for the expansion and renovation of the buildings at 57 and 61 Hartford Street. HSZC member Lucian Childs helped us to get our visions down on paper by creating finely drawn architectural plans.

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## Weekly Schedule

**Sunday:** Informal period of zazen 9:00 am, Lecture 10:00 am, followed by discussion and tea. The morning ends with 15 minute soji (zendo-cleaning), donation requested.

**Monday:** Zazen instruction and orientation for newcomers, 5:30 pm. If you cannot attend at this time please call us. Koan Study Class with Kijun Steve Allen, 8:00 pm.

**Tuesday:** NEW COURSE OFFERING: "Zen Mind, Beginners Mind" with Zenshin Philip Whalen, 8:00 pm. beginning April 4th. This will be an on-going class to take us through a complete reading and discussion of this seminal work by Suzuki-roshi. There will be several weeks in the next few months in which this class will not meet. These dates will be announced at the first class meeting.  
Fees: The fee for both courses is \$5.00 per evening. You can drop in for single classes without pre-registering. Your tuition is a donation to HSZC.  
Dinner is open to the public on Tuesday evenings after zazen. There is a \$3.00 donation.

**Wednesday:** Shanti Support Group, 7:00 pm

**Thursday:** Shanti Support Group, 7:00 pm



Thanks also to the gardening committee who are turning our two back yards into one little park. Tom Small is a professional landscape architect who seems to have unlimited energy and an encyclopedic knowledge of plants. He, along with Ken, Vic, Jerry and Alexej are landscaping with plants that need little water and low maintenance. Thanks also to Green Gulch Farm head gardener Wendy for her help and guidance.

Often HSZC seems to be a very busy place. You may notice much activity and sometimes large inanimate objects like furniture or appliances seem to magically appear or disappear. But there is actually a real person behind these transformations. "John the Mover" as he seems to be universally known (and his truck) have been a great help in turning form into emptiness and emptiness into form.

The fund raising committee have been doing a great job creating our first major event. Angelique Farrow, David Sunseri, Paul Rosenblum, and Gloria Simoneaux deserve appreciation for their efforts to create structures for meeting our increasing financial needs.

The operation of a practice center and hospice are major financial undertakings. We are completely dependent on donations in this regard. Sarah Grayson, who manages the Buddhist Bookstore, and Joel Roberts were instrumental in our being considered for a Social Welfare Grant from the Buddhist Churches of America. We wish to express our thanks to them and our deep gratitude to BCA for the \$4,000 grant which they chose to award to HSZC.

Although of necessity much of our energy is dedicated to responding to the crisis created in our community by the AIDS epidemic, the source of that energy is in our commitment to practice together as a Buddhist community. This would be impossible without the guidance and example of our teachers-- Issan Dorsey, Zenshin Philip Whalen, and Kijun Steve Allen, who have dedicated their lives to this practice. We would also like to welcome Shunko Michael Jamvold, our newest resident priest. He was ordained by Baker-roshi and was later ordained according to the Theravadan Vinaya tradition in Thailand. Before returning to San Francisco he was practicing with Aitken-roshi in Hawaii.

We have been honored by visits of several prominent Buddhist teachers in the last several months.

Tetsugen Glassman-sensei of the New York Zen Community offered incense in the zendo and visited with hospice residents.

Karin Sobun Katherine Thanas was our January Maitri speaker. She has been a great support to HSZC from the earliest days. Her lectures are both thoughtful and from the heart and always well attended. She leads the Monterey Bay Zen Center.

We were also privileged to receive a visit from Maureen Stewart-roshi, who is the resident teacher at the Cambridge Buddhist Association.

On February 11th Issan and Kijun Steve Allen conducted a "Partners in Life" celebration joining together and affirming the relationship of Bill Folk and Michael Kile. The ceremony took place in the Conservatory of flowers in Golden Gate Park.

A memorial service was held in January for Joe Eaton. The ceremony was conducted by Steve and Issan and attended by members of the Gay Men's Spiritual Retreat.

## Special Events Calendar

Tuesday	April 4	New Course Begins: "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind" with Zenshin Philip Whalen, 8:00 pm
Friday	April 7	Buddha's Birthday: two-day sitting begins 6:00 pm
Saturday	April 8	Sitting continues, 5:00 am to 9:40 pm
Sunday	April 9	Sitting continues, 5:00 am to 4:00 pm
Tuesday	April 11	Maitri Evening: zazen 6:00 pm, dinner 7:00 pm, "Exploring the Heart of Healing", a film of hospice advocates Steven Levine and Ram Dass, 7:30pm
Friday	April 21	Full Moon Bodhisattva Ceremony, 6:40 pm
Tuesday	May 2	Maitri Evening: zazen 6:00 pm, dinner 7:00 pm Speaker to be announced
Sunday	May 7	One Day Sitting, 5:00 am-5:00 pm
Friday	May 19	Full Moon Bodhisattva Ceremony, 6:40 pm
Sunday	June 4	One Day Sitting, 5:00 am-5:00 pm
Tuesday	June 6	Maitri Evening: zazen 6:00 pm, dinner 7:00 pm Speaker to be announced
Monday	June 19	Full Moon Bodhisattva Ceremony, 6:40 pm

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## HARTFORD STREET ZEN CENTER

### Daily Schedule

*Monday through Friday:*

Zazen	6:00 am
Interval	6:25 am
Zazen	6:30 am
Service	6:55 am

Zazen	6:00 pm
Service	6:40 pm

### Zendo Protocol

Please plan your schedule so that you allow time to arrive in the zendo five minutes before the beginning of zazen. Be as quiet as possible and walk very softly, bowing as you enter the sitting area and when crossing in front of the altar. It is suggested that you wear dark, loose fitting clothing and that you do not wear socks while sitting.